

# 2018

## ANNUAL REPORT



*Global Fund For Widows*

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is exciting to fathom that from quite modest beginnings, the Global Fund for Widows celebrated its 10th year anniversary in 2018. As we reflect on the last 10 years, we marvel how our humble pilot program in rural Egypt with only 250 widows, has ignited a now globally recognized human rights movement. Perhaps even more exciting is that we ended 2018 having economically empowered 10,000 widows in over 6 countries around the world.

As we promised last year, 2018 marked a watershed year for the widowhood movement. Our high-level advocacy initiatives finally began to bear fruit. At the 62nd Commission of the Status of Women, the Ministers of Gender of Egypt and Malawi co-hosted the first-ever Side Event on widowhood at the United Nations. Our landmark panel welcomed Ministers from Algeria and Kenya, as well as many parliamentarians from around the world, as well as a Chief from Malawi, drawing critical attention to the issue. Our presentation at the Human Rights Council in Geneva launched global inquiry on the issue of the child widow, culminating in our invitation to present the issue at the House of Lords in London. Perhaps the climacteric moment of the year was the watershed commitment by The Right Honorable Lord Bates of the United Kingdom to address issues of widowhood in all of its foreign development policies going forward.

In 2018 we were honored to receive the trust and partnership of Whole Planet Foundation. Their \$100,000 grant enabled GFW to economically empower 2,000 widows with first-time loans and the subsequent launch of 2,000 micro-enterprises in Egypt through our microfinance programming. We are eternally grateful to our partners at the Whole Planet Foundation for being the first foundation in the United States to fund the widowhood movement.

We are exceedingly proud to have launched an innovation in financial inclusion in 2018. With our partner International Collaborative for Science, Engineering, and Education (ICSEE), GFW developed the Widows' Savings and Loan Association – affectionately known as WISALAs in the field. WISALAs enable widows to own their own well capitalized bank through a 2:1 match of their initial investment by GFW. The WISALA innovation brings to the widows a financial inclusion product by which they have access credit, savings, ownership, and insurance. The WISALAs resounding success with our pilot project in Tanzania has inspired GFW to expand the rollout of these banks to widows around the world.

We proudly launched programming in Nigeria in 2018, partnering with Widows' International Development Organization, WIDO, to build a palm oil mill, dig a well, and start a small WISALA for some 400 widows in Abia State. As part of our palm oil mill initiative, we gifted each widow in the program with 3 palm saplings. Unbeknownst to us at the time, we were actually gifting them with their only personally owned possession.

As we look toward 2019, our focus remains on economically empowering widows through our strategic partnerships and through the generosity of our wonderful donors. We continue to advocate against the human rights violations that widows endure, such as violent traditional practices, the widows' inability to inherit, not only her rightful estate, but her own nationality, her own identity, and horrifically, even her own children. We maintain that widows are not property, and cannot be inherited as part of her husband's estate or forcibly married to his next of kin. And we advocate that the child widow, the 15, 13, and 10-year old child widow must never ever be a "thing".

On behalf of our 300 million widows, we are eternally thankful for the support of our patrons, donors, and investors.

Gratefully,

Heather Ibrahim-Leathers  
President



## OUR MISSION

The Global Fund for Widows is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering widows and female heads of households to overcome poverty through skills-based training, job creation, and micro-finance. Ultimately, our goal is to help widows achieve financial stability, self-sufficiency, accountability, and importantly, become a role model to her own children and to others.

The Global Fund for Widows applies its programs throughout the developing world by forming strategic partnerships with local NGOs, which are dedicated to the empowerment of widows. These local NGOs work in close collaboration with the Global Fund for Widows to develop unique solutions for empowering widows that are culturally and socially appropriate, and most importantly—SUSTAINABLE.

Our field work has shown undeniably, broader human rights violations are also brought against the widow causing further struggle and despair. In this area, we see widows endure three main human rights violations: the act of disinheritance, harmful traditional practices, and discrimination.



Disinheritance leads to the loss of family income, contributing to the inability of the widow to service basic needs for her family and small children. The widows themselves are not the only ones who suffer as a result. The widow is forced to remove her children from school. Once the children are removed from school, the widow may have the common instinct to protect her daughter, leading the widow to push her into child marriage. Further, her sons become vulnerable to radicalized indoctrination, as a UNDP report found 33% of extremist recruits in Africa came from widowed households.



Discrimination serves as a barrier to accessing justice, social protections, and economic opportunities. With young children and limited skills, she faces almost no opportunity at safe, much less dignified, work.

Finally, with harmful traditional practices come a variety of health issues including the transmission of HIV/AIDS, ostracization, fear and shame, and the risk of being drawn into human trafficking.





2017



INDIA

In partnership with the Guild of Service, a veteran pioneer of widows' empowerment, the Global Fund for Widows launched the Sana project in India in 2017. Centered on the war-torn regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Sana aims to train women widowed by conflict - most of whom care for young children - in the delicate art of Kashmiri embroidery. More than 50 widows received 36 days of training upon which 70 % of participants received a government Artisan Card - a critical certification that readily enables card holders to work in both private and public sector jobs. The Global Fund for Widows connected project graduates with industry designers, which has allowed graduates to work from home and earn a sustainable income.

GFW is currently expanding activities by sponsoring value chains in support of the now established embroidery enterprise. Widows are recruited to become vendors of essential tools and materials, such as threads, needles and textiles, for widows in the embroidery trade. Others as vendors of solar powered lanterns and operators of solar charging stations. Such efforts increase productivity of multiple stakeholders not limited to program participants, but which include beneficiaries such as students in need of inexpensive lighting solutions to study at night. With these initiatives, GFW expects to cultivate a well-integrated value chain that offers widows a highly visible, and highly sustainable means of income.

2012



EGYPT

In 2012, the Global Fund for Widows launched the Amal Project ('hope' in Arabic) in rural Egypt. Amal started as a humble effort to economically empower widows and female breadwinners through vocational and financial literacy training, micro-finance, micro social savings and lending groups. The Amal project specifically provides the financial framework to establish micro-enterprises, and sets up social funds that act as collective knowledge bases for program participants to share experiences and become an integrated network of mutual benefit. These funds serve an essential psychological support function while increasing the probability of success for the businesses these widows create, which ultimately advances the goal of sustainability for themselves and their families.

Now, with the grant from Whole Planet Foundation in 2018, we have reached an additional 2,000 widows, taking our impact up to 10,000 in Egypt alone. The Amal Project has empowered thousands of widows for whom it aims to provide the necessary infrastructure by which they can organize into farming cooperatives. GFW believes this will allow these widows to unite in leveraging real pricing power in the marketplace as a key stepping stone toward the development of economic value chains. The successful implementation of this strategy will bring about sustainable economic growth and allow Amal Project widows to achieve financial independence.

## TANZANIA

In June of 2018, the Global Fund for Widows, in partnership with the International Collaborative for Science, Education, and the Environment, launched Tanzania's very first Widows Savings and Loan Association (WISALA) in the Maasai region, reaching ---- widows. With the capital accessed through this mechanism, the widows entered a co-operative goat rearing business. Working together and utilizing shared land made this co-operative possible, as many of the widows involved in our Tanzania project are young mothers to several children, and who are, as most women in this region, restricted from land ownership.

In addition to offering economic opportunity and empowerment, these WISALAs have the capacity to create greater social change. By bringing together those who would be ostracized otherwise, widows can successfully re-claim their voices and their lives. Further, these WISALAs may open the eyes of the community to the potential of widows as a whole. Thus far, we are proud to have received broad local support, endorsement and recognition.

2018



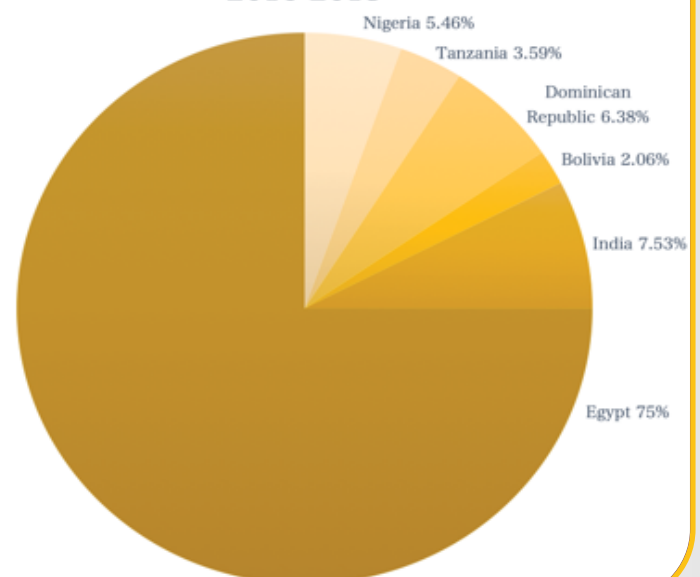
## CONTRIBUTIONS

Between 2016 and 2018, the Global Fund for Widows made \$273,348 USD of contributions in 6 countries, outlined in the GFW Charitable Contributions chart to the right. These projects reached over 10,000 widows combined across the globe, providing economic opportunities and empowerment that previously did not exist.

2018 also brought the Global Fund for Widows our newest innovation in financial products: the Widows Savings and Loan Association, or WISALA. Specifically designed to provide capital and bank ownership to needy widows, the WISALA brings banking opportunities to the unbanked. Thus far, GFW has launched --- of these associations in countries including in Tanzania and Nigeria, with several more in the works to be launched in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and India during 2019.

## LONG TERM PROJECTS

GFW CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS  
2016-2018







**TWK CPA LLC**  
*Certified Public Accountant*

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

September 1st, 2018

To the Board of Directors of:

Global Funds for Widows Inc  
 New York, NY

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Global Funds for Widows Inc. (a non-profit corporation) as of December 31, 2017, and the related statements of activities for the calendar year 2017. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Global Funds for Widows Inc. as of December 31, 2017, and the change in its net assets for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

TWK CPA, LLC,  
 NJ License #: 20CC03204100

**GLOBAL FUNDS FOR WIDOWS INC**  
**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**  
**For the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2018**

INCOME	Contributions and grants	\$ 220,738
	Fund raising	100,000
	Total Income	165,000
EXPENSES	Program Services	151,343
	Fund raising	10,468
	Bank service charge	258
	Travel	5,121
	Professional fees	1,688
	Payroll	1,852
	License and taxes	245
	Credit card commissions	1,371
	Office and admin expenses	3,948
	Total Expenses	246,294
	Change in net assets	239,444
	Net assets at the beginning of year	180,563
	Net assets at end of year	\$ 426,889

**GLOBAL FUNDS FOR WIDOWS INC**  
**COMPARTIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**As of December 31, 2018**

	As of Dec. 31, 2018	As of Dec. 31, 2017
Assets :		
Cash and cash equivalents-unrestricted	\$ 326,889	\$ 180,563
Cash and cash equivalents-temporary restricted	100,000	-
Total Assets :	426,889	180,563
Liabilities :	-	-
Net Assets :	426,889	180,563
Total liabilities and net Assets :	\$ 426,889	\$ 180,563